doing what is right to prevent everything from being lost.

One should not simply conclude that no such extreme conflicts of moral responsibility can occur in war. If such a case were to occur, and if to prevent an incalculable disaster one were to decide to attack the innocent directly, then what would his intentions be? Perhaps there would be a morally significant sense in which he would not *intend* the death of these innocents even though he would be attacking them directly. He would not desire or want their deaths. (Ramsey is not entirely consistent in the present volume about whether "wanting" and "not wanting" an effect to ensue is really the test of "intending." On p. 318 he says that this *is* the test, but on p. 398, in another article, he says that it is not.) But however the question of "wanting" is decided, he would be responding to the deepest kind of moral obligation to those with whom he is in covenant. He would, as Ramsey has put it, be doing "what we know to be right in order that good may come of it."

Ramsey assumes that when noncombatant immunity conflicts with the effort to reduce evil consequences, noncombatant immunity must always take precedence. I am suggesting that in rare types of extreme cases, where the evil consequences would be incalculably disastrous, moral responsibility itself would call this precedence into question. Furthermore, I believe that such a conclusion is assimilable with Ramsey's ethic.

A word of caution is needed in conclusion, however. None of the preceding argument is intended to give the least aid and comfort to that commander, civilian or uniformed, who is hard pressed or impatient or angry and wants an excuse for attacking noncombatants. The commander is exceedingly unlikely to encounter an actual case like the above. He may, but he should not expect to. Furthermore, he will probably be in no condition to assess the matter with moral objectivity. He would do better to work with the maxim that Ramsey has often repeated, that today prudence and moral responsibility largely coincide in requiring the immunity of noncombatants. When it is prudent to be moral, far more people will opt for moral action, though sometimes we are not even fully in favor of prudence.

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